

- [Skip to main content](#)
- [Skip to "About government"](#)
- [Switch to basic HTML version](#)

Language selection

- [Français](#)



[Government of Canada](#)

Search

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Menu

Main Menu

- [Jobs and the workplace](#)
 - [Jobs: home](#)
 - [Find a job](#)
 - [Training](#)
 - [Hire and manage employees](#)
 - [Starting a business](#)
 - [Workplace standards](#)
 - [Pensions and retirement](#)
 - [Employment Insurance and leave](#)
 - [Most requested](#)
 - [View your Records of Employment](#)
 - [Apply for a Social Insurance Number \(SIN\)](#)
 - [Find a student job](#)
 - [Hire a temporary foreign worker](#)
 - [Immigrate as a skilled worker](#)
- [Immigration and citizenship](#)
 - [Immigration and citizenship: home](#)
 - [My application](#)
 - [Visit](#)
 - [Immigrate](#)
 - [Work](#)
 - [Study](#)
 - [Citizenship](#)
 - [New immigrants](#)
 - [Canadians](#)

- [Refugees and asylum](#)
- [Enforcement and violations](#)
- [Most requested](#)
 - [Sign in or create an account to apply online](#)
 - [Check your application status](#)
 - [Check application processing times](#)
 - [Find an application form](#)
 - [Pay your fees](#)
 - [Find out if you need an eTA or a visa to visit Canada](#)
 - [Have questions? Find answers in the Help Centre](#)
- [Travel and tourism](#)
 - [Travel and tourism: home](#)
 - [Travel advice and advisories](#)
 - [Canadian attractions, events and experiences](#)
 - [Canadian passports](#)
 - [Travelling abroad](#)
 - [Air travel](#)
 - [Returning to Canada](#)
 - [Assistance abroad](#)
 - [Stay connected](#)
 - [Visit Canada](#)
 - [Most requested](#)
 - [Consent letter for children travelling abroad](#)
 - [Canada - U.S. border wait times](#)
 - [Register as a Canadian abroad](#)
 - [Apply for NEXUS](#)
 - [What you can bring home to Canada](#)
 - [Contact an embassy or consulate](#)
 - [Cannabis and international travel](#)
- [Business and industry](#)
 - [Business and industry: home](#)
 - [Starting a business](#)
 - [Business grants and financing](#)
 - [Business taxes](#)
 - [Federal corporations](#)
 - [Hiring and managing employees](#)
 - [International trade and investment](#)
 - [Permits, licences and regulations](#)
 - [Doing business with government](#)
 - [R&D and innovation](#)
 - [Research and business intelligence](#)
 - [Intellectual property and copyright](#)
 - [Maintaining your business](#)
 - [Protecting your business](#)
 - [Insolvency for business](#)
 - [Most requested](#)
 - [Find a corporation](#)
 - [Report your imported goods](#)
 - [Search for trademarks](#)

- [Review custom tariffs for importing goods](#)
 - [Find a patent](#)
 - [Import and export from Canada](#)
 - [Name a business](#)
 - [Make changes to your corporation \(Online Filing Centre\)](#)
- [Benefits](#)
 - [Benefits: home](#)
 - [Employment Insurance and leave](#)
 - [Family and caregiving benefits](#)
 - [Public pensions](#)
 - [Education and training](#)
 - [Housing benefits](#)
 - [Disability benefits](#)
 - [Benefits finder](#)
 - [Most requested](#)
 - [Apply for Employment Insurance](#)
 - [Benefit payment dates](#)
 - [Student loans](#)
 - [Submit an EI report](#)
 - [Sign in to your account](#)
 - [Sign up for direct deposit](#)
 - [Child and family benefits calculators](#)
- [Health](#)
 - [Health: home](#)
 - [Food and nutrition](#)
 - [Diseases and conditions](#)
 - [Vaccines and immunization](#)
 - [Drug and health products](#)
 - [Product safety](#)
 - [Health risks and safety](#)
 - [Healthy living](#)
 - [Indigenous health](#)
 - [Health system and services](#)
 - [Science, research and data](#)
 - [Most requested](#)
 - [Food and product recalls and safety alerts](#)
 - [Flu symptoms and treatment](#)
 - [Cannabis](#)
 - [Canada's food guides](#)
 - [Medical devices licensed for sale](#)
 - [Travel health notices](#)
- [Taxes](#)
 - [Taxes: home](#)
 - [Income tax](#)
 - [GST/HST](#)
 - [Payroll](#)
 - [Business number](#)
 - [Savings and pension plans](#)
 - [Child and family benefits](#)

- [Excise taxes, duties, and levies](#)
- [Charities and giving](#)
- [Most requested](#)
 - [My Account](#)
 - [My Business Account](#)
 - [Represent a Client](#)
 - [File a GST/HST return \(NETFILE\)](#)
 - [Make a payment to the Canada Revenue Agency](#)
 - [Find the next benefit payment date](#)
- [Environment and natural resources](#)
 - [Environment and natural resources: home](#)
 - [Weather, climate and hazards](#)
 - [Energy](#)
 - [Natural resources](#)
 - [Agricultural practices](#)
 - [Fisheries](#)
 - [Wildlife, plants and species](#)
 - [Pollution and waste management](#)
 - [Environmental conservation and protection](#)
 - [Most requested](#)
 - [Local weather forecast](#)
 - [Fuel-efficient vehicles](#)
 - [Home energy efficiency](#)
 - [Species at risk](#)
 - [Prepare for severe weather](#)
- [National security and defence](#)
 - [National security and defenceDefence: home](#)
 - [National security](#)
 - [Canadian Armed Forces](#)
 - [Defence equipment purchases and upgrades](#)
 - [Transportation security](#)
 - [Securing the border](#)
 - [Cyber security](#)
 - [Jobs in national security and defence](#)
 - [Services and benefits for the military](#)
 - [Most requested](#)
 - [Jobs in the Canadian Armed Forces](#)
 - [Military ranks](#)
 - [Defence equipment](#)
 - [Current list of terrorist entities](#)
 - [Join the Cadets](#)
 - [Canada's Defence policy](#)
- [Culture, history and sport](#)
 - [Culture, history and sport: home](#)
 - [Funding - Culture, history and sport](#)
 - [Events, celebrations and commemorations](#)
 - [Cultural landmarks and attractions](#)
 - [Canadian identity and society](#)
 - [Sport](#)

- [History and heritage](#)
- [Arts and media](#)
- [Cultural youth programs](#)
- [Cultural trade and investment](#)
- [Most requested](#)
 - [Visit the Canadian Virtual War Memorial](#)
 - [Anthems and symbols of Canada](#)
 - [Find a CRTC decision](#)
 - [Research your family history](#)
 - [Search census records](#)
 - [Landmarks and attractions in Canada's capital](#)
- [Policing, justice and emergencies](#)
 - [Policing, justice and emergencies: home](#)
 - [Policing](#)
 - [Justice](#)
 - [Emergencies](#)
 - [Corrections](#)
 - [Parole, record suspension, expungement and clemency](#)
 - [Victims of crime](#)
 - [Most requested](#)
 - [Apply/Renew a firearms licence](#)
 - [Get a criminal records check](#)
 - [Apply for a criminal record suspension](#)
 - [What to do during an emergency](#)
 - [Know the law on impaired driving](#)
 - [Help solve a crime](#)
- [Transport and infrastructure](#)
 - [Transport and infrastructure: home](#)
 - [Aviation](#)
 - [Marine transportation](#)
 - [Road transportation](#)
 - [Rail transportation](#)
 - [Dangerous goods](#)
 - [Infrastructure](#)
 - [Most requested](#)
 - [Vehicle recalls](#)
 - [Drone safety](#)
 - [What you can't bring on an airplane](#)
 - [Register your vessel](#)
 - [Child car seat safety](#)
 - [Transporting dangerous goods - Regulations](#)
 - [Canadian Aviation Regulations](#)
- [Canada and the world](#)
 - [Canada and the world: home](#)
 - [International offices and emergency contacts](#)
 - [Study, work and travel worldwide](#)
 - [Funding for international initiatives](#)
 - [Global issues and international assistance](#)
 - [International trade and investment](#)

- [International relations](#)
- [Information by countries and territories](#)
- [Stories](#)
- [Most requested](#)
 - [Find a Canadian scholarship as an international student](#)
 - [Find international study or research opportunities in Canada](#)
 - [Contact an embassy or consulate](#)
 - [Authenticate a document](#)
 - [Contact a foreign representative in Canada](#)
 - [International treaties signed by Canada](#)
- [Money and finances](#)
 - [Money and financesFinance: home](#)
 - [Managing your money](#)
 - [Debt and borrowing](#)
 - [Savings and investments](#)
 - [Education funding](#)
 - [Pensions and retirement](#)
 - [Protection from frauds and scams](#)
 - [Financial tools and calculators](#)
 - [Financial literacy programs](#)
 - [Consumer affairs](#)
 - [Insolvency](#)
 - [Taxes](#)
 - [Government finances](#)
 - [Business grants and financing](#)
 - [Financial and money services regulation](#)
 - [Most requested](#)
 - [Find a bankruptcy or insolvency record](#)
 - [Student loans](#)
 - [Set up direct deposit](#)
 - [Mortgages](#)
 - [Credit report and scores](#)
 - [Make a budget](#)
 - [Rates and contribution limits](#)
- [Science and innovation](#)
 - [Science and innovation: home](#)
 - [Research funding and awards](#)
 - [Science subjects](#)
 - [Open data, statistics and archives](#)
 - [Research institutes and facilities](#)
 - [R&D and innovation](#)
 - [Intellectual property and copyright](#)
 - [Directory of scientists and research professionals](#)
 - [Science education resources](#)
 - [Most requested](#)
 - [National building codes](#)
 - [Official time across Canada](#)
 - [Check sunrise and sunset times](#)
 - [Grants for technological innovation \(IRAP\)](#)

- [Federal Science Library](#)
- [Live view of northern lights cam](#)

You are here:

1. [Home](#)
2. [Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada](#)
3. [Newsroom](#)

Speaking notes for Ahmed Hussen, Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship: An announcement on the Pre-arrival Settlement Services Program

From: [Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada](#)

Speech

As Delivered

S.U.C.C.E.S.S. Social Services Centre
Vancouver, British Columbia

Good morning. Thank you for joining us here at S.U.C.C.E.S.S.

Before I begin I'd like to acknowledge that we are on the traditional territories of the Musqueam, the Tsleil-Waututh and the Squamish Nations.

As their name suggests, S.U.C.C.E.S.S. has been helping newcomers to succeed in our country for more than 45 years.

Canadians recognize that welcoming newcomers to Canada and helping them succeed is a great source of national strength. Of course, we've seen many examples of immigration's positive impact right here in Vancouver for generations.

Take the case of David Labistour, the CEO of Mountain Equipment Corp and winner of B.C.'s 2017 CEO Award. Mr. Labistour was born in South Africa and immigrated to Canada in 1999. He became the CEO of Mountain Equipment Corp. in 2008 and has since added new stores right across Canada. The headquarters of this company now employs 350 people in Vancouver and MEC employs a staff of nearly 2,500 people across Canada.

Another example is Melinda Dhaliwal. She was born in India and arrived in Vancouver in 1999, where she studied engineering at the University of British Columbia. In 2013, she became the co-founder of Lion's Gate funding group, a successful venture capital firm that specializes in India-focused international venture

projects. Lion's Gate has since provided over \$900 million in capital for 4,398 projects.

Many of these types of success stories can be found right here in Vancouver and in communities right across the country.

I meet people all across Canada every day who have contributed so much to Canada after arriving as newcomers. In addition to their economic contributions, we know that immigrants to Canada have been an extraordinary source of strength for our social and cultural wellbeing, making significant contributions to our performing arts, sciences, education and technology.

The positive role that immigrants play in our economy and society underscores just how important it is for us to ensure that all newcomers to Canada succeed because, when newcomers and immigrants to succeed in Canada, Canada succeeds as well. For this to happen we need to ensure that newcomers have the tools they need to be able to find their way in Canadian society.

Learning a new language and settling into a new society are some of the challenges that newcomers face. As someone who arrived in Canada at the age of 16, I know firsthand what those challenges can be about and I relied on the generosity of Canadians and settlement services to not only settle but integrate into Canadian society.

Without that warm embrace and welcoming nature of Canadians and the services that newcomers rely on, I wouldn't be where I am today. But having said that, I always wonder if some of those initial challenges that I faced and some of the initial challenges that newcomers continue to face were avoidable.

That is precisely what the Government of Canada is trying to do with our Pre-arrival Services Program. We aim to assist newcomers in overcoming barriers and initial hurdles to settlement and integration before they arrive in Canada. By providing newcomers with vital information and supports while they are still abroad, they are more likely to have realistic expectations of their new life in Canada.

They are more likely to be better prepared for life in Canada and they are more likely to "hit the ground running." In addition to orientation services, pre-arrival settlement services help newcomers to enter the job market, practice in their profession and find employment in their field.

When we select a foreign-trained engineer or medical professional to come to Vancouver, we have to equip them so they can practice in their chosen field and benefit the people of Vancouver and the surrounding community. That is why pre-arrival services also include supports such as getting the first steps going in the recognition of foreign trained credentials.

We know our pre-arrival settlement program is working because we hear from newcomers themselves. In a recent survey of newcomers who already benefited from pre-arrival services, the overwhelming majority of those newcomers felt they were better prepared for their new life in Canada.

Also, an evaluation of the Pre-arrival Services Program found that participants are gaining knowledge of life in Canada and the job market at a higher rate than those who have not used those services. For all these reasons, the government places great importance on providing newcomers with the settlement support services they need before they arrive.

Therefore, that is why the government of Canada will invest nearly \$113 million towards an improved Pre-arrival Settlement Services Program for newcomers, through to the year 2023.

Under this renewed program, there will be three dedicated pathways for key groups: economic and family class immigrants, francophone immigrants, and refugees. Sixteen experienced service provider organizations

with proven track records, results and strong partnerships will deliver virtual and in-person services to newcomers around the world before they arrive in Canada.

Over the years, S.U.C.C.E.S.S. has been a very important partner in helping us to deliver our pre-arrival settlement services program.

That is why, as part of IRCC's renewed Pre-arrival Settlement Services Program, I am very happy to announce that Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada will provide SUCCESS with an additional investment of \$22.4 million to deliver these important services.

Through this additional \$22.4 million investment, SUCCESS will be able to further expand its pre-arrival services to more clients abroad, which means more newcomers and refugees will be better prepared for their life in Canada and better equipped for success.

Because we know that when newcomers to Canada succeed, Canada succeeds. Of course, once they do arrive, S.U.C.C.E.S.S. will continue to play an important role in these newcomers' settlement journey.

With today's funding announcement, SUCCESS will be able to assist even more newcomers who are getting ready to come to Canada, giving them the tools they need to succeed, moving them closer to having their foreign credentials recognized, moving them closer to transition to the Canadian labour market before they even leave their country.

This is why pre-arrival services are so important and this is why our government believes in further investments in organizations like SUCCESS that are delivering these crucial services for newcomers and overall for Canada.

Thank you.

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- [Contact us](#)
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- [Treaties, laws and regulations](#)
- [Government-wide reporting](#)
- [Prime Minister](#)
- [How government works](#)
- [Open government](#)

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- [Social media](#)
- [Mobile applications](#)
- [About Canada.ca](#)
- [Terms and conditions](#)

- [Privacy](#)

[Top of page](#)